




MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council

THRU: Spencer Cronk, City Manager

FROM: Christopher Shorter, Assistant City Manager 

DATE: May 7, 2020

SUBJECT: **Modified City Operations – Parks Department and Animal Services Office**

This memo provides an update regarding City operations during the COVID-19 public health emergency. In support of a phased-in approach to opening our economy, City operations remain on modified work schedules until May 29. Two departments are adjusting their services to continue providing services to residents while ensuring public health and safety.

Animal Services Office (ASO). Animal Services will begin offering adoption of dogs to the general public via appointment beginning Friday, May 8. Adopters can view adoptable dogs on the AAC website, choose up to two dogs to meet and then contact ASOAnimalAdoption@austintexas.gov to schedule an appointment. Upon arrival at their appointment, adopters will have time to meet and play with their chosen pups and decide if they'd like to move forward with the adoption. For more information, visit the [Austin Animal Center website](#).

Austin Parks and Recreation Department's (PARC). The department is making adjustments to the current modified park system operations. PARC continues to monitor parks for safe usage during the City of Austin's modified operations. Based upon recent observations and data collection related to park usage over the past two weeks, PARC will make the following operational adjustments:

- Beginning Friday, May 8, 2020, PARC will monitor park capacity at Emma Long Metropolitan Park, Commons Ford Ranch Metropolitan Park, and Walter E. Long Metropolitan Park. Once capacity is reached at these parks, signage will indicate no additional vehicles will be admitted. Staff will be on-site to educate park patrons and inform them of closures.
- Starting Thursday, May 14, park patrons will be required to obtain day passes for Emma Long Metropolitan Park, Commons Ford Ranch Metropolitan Park, and Walter E. Long Metropolitan Park via an online registration system or make a reservation by phone from Thursday through Sunday. A limited number of passes will be available per day. No entry will be granted without a pass. Regular entry fees apply for Emma Long and Walter E. Long parks. Vehicle access to Commons Ford entry remains free; however, a day pass will be required. No registration is required Monday through Wednesday.

Throughout the week, PARD has removed parking lot barricades. Barricades unintentionally restricted emergency vehicle access due to park patrons parking illegally along park entrance roads.

In accordance with recent State Reopening of Services Order, golf courses, tennis centers, skeet shooting, and boating concessions are permitted to operate provided each can comply with the Order's operational criteria. Some concessions have elected to remain closed.

At this time, PARD facilities and park system amenities remain closed, as previously outlined. Park system restrooms, water fountains, boat ramps, green spaces and trails remain open. PARD will continue to monitor park safety throughout these modified operations and adjust as needed. PARD will continue to message social distancing and other safety precautions via flyer distribution and social media.

Park Rangers and Park Monitors continue to patrol and monitor the entire park system; focusing attention where there is traditionally high usage. Additional information regarding the modified operations, closures, and online registration will be made available on the PARD website, austintexas.gov/parks.

If you have any questions regarding PARD operations, please contact Kimberly McNeeley at Kimberly.mcneeley@austintexas.gov or 512-974-6722. If you have any questions regarding ASO operations, please contact Don Bland at don.bland@austintexas.gov or 512-978-0521.

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